

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A protein preparation ~~characterized by~~ comprising (i) at least 60% protein ~~of plant origin from a plant source~~, based on the dry weight, (ii) a milk-like aroma, which corresponds to ~~an amount of~~ at least 1 ppm of diacetyl, and ~~a content of~~ (iii) lactic acid, wherein said plant source comprises lupine seed.

2. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized by~~ wherein said protein preparation comprises at least 70% protein ~~of plant origin from a plant source~~, based on the dry weight, a milk-like aroma ~~which that~~ corresponds to ~~an amount of~~ at least 7 ppm of diacetyl, and ~~a content of~~ at least 0.5% by weight of lactic acid.

3. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 2, ~~characterized by~~ wherein said protein preparation comprises at least 85% protein ~~of plant origin from a plant source~~, based on the dry weight, a milk-like aroma ~~which that~~ corresponds to ~~an amount of~~ at least 15 ppm of diacetyl, and ~~a content of~~ at least 1.0% by weight of lactic acid.

4. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the said lactic acid is predominantly or exclusively L-lactic acid.

5. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized in that it~~ wherein said protein preparation is lactose-free and cholesterol-free.

6. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ wherein said protein preparation comprises probiotic lactic acid bacteria.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized in that, in 10% strength solution at pH 7, it, wherein said protein preparation~~ (A) has an emulsifying activity of 40 to 50% in a 10% strength solution at pH 7 and/or in that, in 1% strength solution, it (B) can emulsify at least 400 ml, preferably at least 500 ml, of oil/g of protein in a 1% strength solution.

9. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, ~~characterized in that, at a pH of 7, it wherein said protein preparation~~ has a foam activity of at least 600%, preferably greater than 950%, and/or a foam density of 190 to 250 g/l at a pH of 7.

10. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A method for producing a protein preparation, ~~characterized in that wherein a plant starting material is pretreated in a suitable manner having and (A) has~~ at least 60% by weight of plant protein, based on the dry weight of the material, (B) is fermented in a manner known per se using a microorganism which that produces lactic acid in the presence of one or more nutrient source(s), nitrogen source(s) and/or mineral source(s) necessary for the micro-organism, and (C) comprises lupine seed.

11. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 10, ~~characterized in that the wherein said~~ microorganism is selected from preferably homo-fermentative and potentially heterofermentative microorganisms, selected from lactococci, lactobacilli and pediococci.

12. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 11, ~~characterized in that the wherein said~~ microorganism is selected from *Lactobacillus perolens*, *Lactobacillus paracasei* and *Lactobacillus plantarum*.

13. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 10, ~~characterized in that the wherein said~~ fermentation is carried out using a solution or dispersion of the plant protein in a concentration of 5-25% dry matter, preferably 15 to 20% dry matter.

14. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 10, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said fermentation is performed in a medium to which citric acid has been added in an amount of 0.1 to 2.5 g/l, preferably of about 2 g/l.

15. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 10, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said fermentation is performed in the presence of a buffer which buffers the fall in pH due to the formation of lactic acid.

16. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein ~~the said~~ milk-like aroma was obtained by the biotechnological treatment of a predominantly or exclusively source plant ~~starting~~ material.

17. (Currently Amended) The protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, obtained by a method for producing a protein preparation, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said source plant ~~starting~~ material is pretreated in a suitable manner having at least 60% by weight of plant protein, based on the dry weight of the material, is fermented ~~in a manner known per se~~ using a microorganism ~~which~~ that produces lactic acid in the presence of one or more nutrient source(s), nitrogen source(s) and/or mineral source(s) necessary for the micro-organism.

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~use of a~~ protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1 ~~as,~~ wherein said protein preparation is suitable as a food ingredient.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~use of a~~ protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 6 ~~as,~~ wherein said protein preparation is a probiotic food.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~use of a~~ protein preparation ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 18, wherein said protein preparation suitable for producing ice cream.

21. (New) The protein preparation of claim 1, wherein said protein preparation (A) has an emulsifying activity of 40 to 50% in a 10% strength solution at pH 7 and/or (B) can emulsify at least 500 ml of oil/g of protein in a 1% strength solution.